

Appl. No. 10/605,501
Amdt. dated November 10, 2005
Reply to Office action of August 15, 2005

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

1. Rejection of claims 1-4 and 7-13 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a):

Claims 1-4 and 7-13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kao et al. (2002/0085053) in view of Kato (6,406,113) for reasons of record.

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Response:

Claim 1 has been amended to overcome this rejection. Claim 1 now contains limitations that were previously found in claims 3 and 4. Claim 1 now specifies that M is an integer equal to or greater than three. In addition, claim 1 has also been amended to state that every Mth nozzle is selected to be in each of the M masks.

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Although Kao teaches in Fig.3A that each row of masks 310 and 320 include alternating nozzles, Kao only teaches in the corresponding disclosure that the masks 310 and 320 are complementary. Kao does not teach that individual mask patterns for higher numbers of masks (such as $M \geq 3$) should also be created such that every Mth nozzle is selected to be in each of the M masks. Therefore, one skilled in the art would not realize the claimed invention from Kao's teaching of complementary masks since there is insufficient motivation to select every Mth nozzle to be in each of the M masks for M being equal to or greater than three. The amended claim 1 should therefore be allowable over the cited prior art. Claims 2 and 7-13 are dependent on claim 1, and should be allowed if claim 1 is allowed. Reconsideration of claims 1, 2, and 7-13 is respectfully requested.

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2. Introduction to new claims 14-17:

New claim 14 is drafted to include the limitations of claim 1, claim 3, and step (b1) of claim 5. The cited prior art does not teach "choosing contiguous groups of N nozzles to be included in a first mask", as is recited in claim 14. Therefore, claim 14 should be allowable over the prior art combination. New claim 15 contains the

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remaining steps (b2) to (b3) from the original claim 5.

5 New claim 16 is drafted to include the limitations of claim 1, claim 3, and steps (c1) to (c4) of claim 6. The cited prior art does not teach repeatedly "selecting among the group of M closest nozzles a next nozzle which is farthest away from the current nozzle, and choosing the next nozzle to be included in the first mask", as is recited in claim 16. Therefore, claim 16 should be allowable over the prior art combination. New claim 17 contains the remaining steps (c5) to (c6) from the original claim 6.

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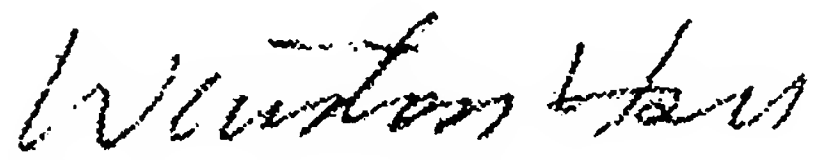
No new matter has been introduced through any of the new claims or claim amendments. Acceptance of new claims 14-17 is respectfully requested.

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All pending claims are believed to be in allowable form. In light of the above statements in favor of patentability, the applicant respectfully requests that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case.

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Sincerely yours,



Date: Nov. 10, 2005

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